

251 MEN PERISH.

Ninety-nine Others Injured in the Maine Disaster.

TWO GREAT EXPLOSIONS

An Undetermined Mass Was Seen to Shoot High Into the Air.

A BOARD OF INQUIRY ORDERED.

Secretary Long and Naval Experts Believe the Explosion Was Accidental.

But the Cause of the Disaster Has Not Yet Been Ascertained—A Theory That Spanish Mines Were Laid to Destroy the Ship—Many Suggestions of Treachery in Spanish Waters—Spain Sends Her Condolences and Offers to Assist—The Administration Desires the People to Suspend Judgment Until the Facts Are Ascertained—Nothing Said About the Catastrophe on the Floor of Congress—The List of the Men Who Were Saved.

HAVANA, Feb. 16, 4 P. M.—Witnesses of the explosion that destroyed the Maine say that at the moment of concussion a vast mass was seen to rise to a great height. In the sudden and blinding light no one seems to have been able to discern the nature of this mass or whether it rose from inside the battleship or outside it.

Up to this time there are reported 251 killed and ninety-nine wounded. Immediately after the report small boats hurrying to the spot from all sides picked up twenty-eight wounded men struggling in the water. Of these, six were on the point of succumbing when pulled in. They were taken on board the City of Washington and cared for. Gustave G. Dressler of the crew was completely and permanently blinded. Andrew V. Erickson, — Andersen, and — Thompson are wounded badly. Not one of the troops in the military hospital has died up to this hour, but the condition of several is precarious. The Mascotte will take today to Key West some of the injured who are in condition to be moved. American vessels are expected at any moment to arrive for the purpose of rendering any assistance possible.

From the nature of the disaster and the testimony of the survivors it appears that the line of greatest force of the explosion was a little forward of amidships. It is there that the worst damage was done. The chief officers were either well off or ashore. Thus they escaped unhurt. The seamen and marines by their position were forced to bear the brunt of the disaster, and the frightful mortality was almost wholly confined to them. One of the junior officers should have been on duty on the forward deck, and it may have been that Lieutenant Jenkins, who is missing, lost his life. It is also probable that Engineer Merritt, another missing man, was below on duty and went down with the ship. Lieutenant-Commander Richard Wainwright, who was at first reported lost, is safe.

Five of the crew immediately after the explosion ran to the main ammunition storage room with the idea that they might save that from explosion. None of them has since been heard of. It is almost certain that they went to the bottom, ready at their posts for duty.

HAVANA, Feb. 16—1 P. M.—Survivors include Capt. Sigbee, Lieut. Commander Wainwright, Lieut. Holman, Lieut. Hood, Lieut. Blandin, Chief Engineer Howell, Surgeon Heberberger, Paymaster Ryan, Lieut. Catlin, Passed Assistant Engineer Brown, Chaplain Chickwick, Cadets Holden, Bronson, and Boyde, Assistant Engineer Crenshaw, Engineer Washington, Gunner Hill, Boatswain Larbin, Carpenter Holmes, Pay Clerk Nicholas Carath.

Capt. Sigbee is now on board the Ward liner City of Washington, and refuses to speak with anybody. When the roar of the explosion announced the destruction of the battleship, he was at once ordered to the ship, but it was found that it was impossible for him to render any assistance there. Twenty-six of the wounded were transferred to the steamship City of Washington, where they were properly attended to. Many of the Havana physicians volunteered their services. Thirty-five other wounded sailors received medical attendance at the Military Hospital. The Spanish theory of the cause of the accident is that a boiler exploded. The Maine sank in a little over an hour.

Many towboats and other vessels were busy all night trying to render all possible assistance. The wounded were taken to the hospital by the Bremen. A large number of boats are now searching for the bodies of the missing men.

total loss. Capt. Sigbee himself acknowledged as much. Directly after the explosion he took fire and burned so severely that it was only by exercising great haste that he was able to escape from the ship.

Although there was great confusion on the ship after the explosion, still perfect discipline was maintained. All reports agree on this point. Capt. Sigbee himself was largely responsible for this state of affairs.

It was between 9:45 and 10 o'clock last night that the explosion occurred. Capt. Sigbee was below at the time, but with the report of the explosion he rushed up on deck in his shirt sleeves.

Thus attired he gave his orders. Efforts were at first made to save the vessel, but when Capt. Sigbee realized the extent of the damage done and that many casualties had occurred he bent all his energies to assuring the safety of his men. The report was heard in the city, and crowds immediately flocked to the harbor front. Flames at that time were bursting from the battleship. The greatest excitement prevailed among those on shore.

The commander of the Spanish ship Alfonso XII, immediately had boats lowered and sent to the assistance of the Maine. These boats picked up several sailors of the Maine who were swimming. They also rescued several of the wounded.

General Lee early this morning was in conference with Gen. Blanco at the palace.

THE SURVIVORS GO TO KEY WEST.

They Were Taken There Yesterday Afternoon by the Olivette.

HAVANA, Feb. 16—7 P. M.—The steamer Olivette left port at 3 P. M. for Key West with all the survivors of the Maine disaster. The ship was crowded with the wounded and the dead. Eight officers, twenty-six seriously injured men, and two marines were left behind.

Capt. Sigbee did not leave his sinking ship till every man had been taken off, and he remained in a boat in the neighborhood as long as there was any hope of saving any of the men who were in the water. He says he has not the slightest idea what caused the accident. He was thrown from his bed by the explosion and his head was slightly bruised, but otherwise he received no injury. The first thing he did was to go on deck and order the flooding of the large quantity of gun cotton on board. The order was promptly carried out, and it is certain that no damage was done by this explosion.

Lieutenant-Commander Wainwright was also in his room when the explosion occurred. He speaks in the highest terms of the conduct with which Sigbee met the disaster. He says that the ship was in a terrible situation. No sooner had two or three of the officers appeared on deck than an order was given to lower the boats. Four of them were immediately lowered and three were filled with men, but the fourth boat was swamped before it could be utilized. When the explosion occurred Lieut. Blandin was on the deck.

It is said that the men who carried out the order to flood the gun cotton failed to return, and the brave men undoubtedly lost their lives in the performance of their hazardous duty.

Several of the officers were down below together when the explosion occurred, and they were killed. The first officer to be killed was the first engineer, the paymaster, the surgeon of the Maine, and two naval cadets remain in Havana with Capt. Sigbee.

The cause of the disaster is, up to this time, a dark mystery, because all who could have thrown some light on the affair have perished. If the explosion had happened ashore, it would not have been so mysterious.

The exact number of killed is 251. There were on the warship 354 persons.

Peggie, a pet dog of Capt. Sigbee, was saved. Lieut. J. J. Blandin, who is a survivor of the Samoa catastrophe, also escaped.

All the officers and sailors who are now alive greatly extol the conduct of the Commander and sailors of the Spanish warship Alfonso XII, who from the very first gave all the help they could to the crew of the Maine and placed a special guard at night round the sunken battleship to rescue the bodies of the American sailors.

The Alfonso XII and the Spanish gunboat Legassi placed their flags at half mast.

The Autonomist Cabinet held a special council today, presided over by Gen. Blanco, in which it was resolved that the President of the Cabinet, Señor Olague, and the Secretary of the Interior should call on Consul-General Lee to express their condolences, and should also call to President McKinley their deep regret at the catastrophe.

The municipality of Havana also resolved to participate in the funeral and to call on Consul-General Lee and the Secretary of the Interior to express their condolences, and should also call to President McKinley their deep regret at the catastrophe.

The military newspaper *Diario del Ejército* is published to-day in mourning. All public spectacles have been suspended.

Gen. Blanco will assist at the funeral ceremonies.

All the wharves are crowded with people eager to hear the latest news. Many private boats are skimming over the waters of the bay loaded with residents of the city, all eager to see and learn all they can.

Up to this time only eighteen bodies have been recovered, and they have been taken to the morgue.

Some of the bodies are badly mutilated, and others are badly burned.

The bodies that are supposed to be on board the vessel will hardly be recovered on account of the utter destruction of the battleship.

A special judge has been appointed by the local government to investigate the cause of the disaster.

SPAIN'S CONDOLENCES.

The Government Expresses to Gen. Woodford Its Regret for the Catastrophe.

Special Cable Despatch to THE SUN.

MADRID, Feb. 16.—The following semi-official note was issued this evening:

"The news of the disaster to the American warship Maine has produced a painful impression in Madrid. It was at first feared that the catastrophe might be attributable to some rash act. Afterward, as the details were received, these fears were dispelled and transformed into feelings of sympathy and sorrow for the misfortune."

The Government has expressed to United States Minister Woodford its regret for the catastrophe, especially in view of the fact that it occurred in waters within Spain's jurisdiction.

"An Admiral, in full uniform, has called upon

Minister Woodford in behalf of the Minister of Marine and the Cabinet."

The Government has telegraphed to the authorities in Cuba to do everything possible to relieve the distress of the wounded and to give the Maine's officers and men everything they require.

Prime Minister Sagasta went to the palace and informed the Queen Regent of the catastrophe and tendered expressions of sympathy.

Minister Woodford first learned of it from the Admiral who visited him to express the sympathy of the Ministry.

EXPRESSIONS OF SYMPATHY.

Official Calls at Our Embassy in London—Sincere Feeling of Regret.

Special Cable Despatch to THE SUN.

LONDON, Feb. 16.—The naval attaché of the German and other embassies and legations called at the American Embassy this afternoon and tendered expressions of sympathy and regret to Secretary White, who is in charge of the Embassy in the absence of Ambassador Hay.

The disaster to the Maine was the absorbing topic at Lord Salisbury's weekly reception, which was held at the Foreign Office today.

The news of the blowing up of the warship was received at the Admiralty with a feeling of sympathy directed to Washington, and the Russian and Italian naval attachés here called at the American Embassy today to express regret at the occurrence.

At the mass meeting of Irishmen held here today to honor the memory and deeds of the men of the Maine, the Irish Nationalist League, headed by John Dillon, T. P. O'Connor and many other leading Irish Nationalists, this resolution was adopted:

"A large representative meeting of Irish Nationalists assembled in St. James's Hall, London, has heard with the deepest grief of the disaster that has befallen the United States warship Maine, and begs the President to convey to the American nation its deep and sincere sympathy. The sorrow of the Americans will appeal always to Irish hearts."

Congress has been held in check today by the forced conservatism and tranquillity of the President and the Administration officials. In the Senate and House the desire to take action of some sort was almost overpowering, but the good judgment of the cooler heads prevailed, and it was wisely decided that the deed was caused by a treacherous enemy of Cuba and of her friend, the United States, then the vengeance of the Government will be swift and sure. The President has taken the public into his confidence by directing that all information shall be given fully to the newspapers as soon as received.

Not since that midsummer day, nearly seventeen years ago, when President Garfield was shot down by an assassin as he was entering the railway station in this city to start upon a holiday, has such a public event occurred. All harbor and excitement as the early morning despatch from Capt. Sigbee which the President and Secretary of the Navy were awakened from a sound sleep to receive. The White House and State War and Navy building have been crowded with eager, anxious, and excited citizens. The news of the disaster has been received at the Admiralty Office in London after the Victoria disaster, when relatives and friends of officers and men of the ill-fated battleship made distressing exhibitions of their grief, but the space outside the office of Secretary Long was frequently packed solid with people anxious to see the President and Secretary of the Navy in Washington, including a number on the retired list, hurried to the department for information about the fate of friends on board the Maine. Not one of them was without some shipment who was numbered among the list of her officers. A few men who had brothers or sons or other relatives in the Maine, and the naval officers in Washington, including a number on the retired list, hurried to the department for information about the fate of friends on board the Maine. Not one of them was without some shipment who was numbered among the list of her officers. 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